

Comparative study of “Saraswati and Sindhu”, the two key Rigvedic Rivers

VR Patil (email:vrpmet@yahoo.com)

Background:

Rigved is a very complex Indian origin text to deal with as it covers different aspects of literature right from the **philosophy** employed to understand the activities of **Mother Nature** starting with **Rta** to **Nasadiya Sukta**; repetition of the **myth** to overcome the water scarcity experienced by the people (**Indra-Vritra war**); the **conflict of interest** among the warrior class people during the **Five Early Mandalas**; **various beliefs** (the **Deities of Imaginations**) and **practices** (**Yajna** ritual, **Soma** and **Animal** sacrifice) developed by the ancient visionary Rishis and the application of the different **structural formats** (chandaas/meters) plus the use of new **vocabulary** to compose magnificent **Songs of Praise** over a very long period.

Yet **Rigved**, the ancient document can be learned using three steps method given below.

1. **अध्ययन/ Adhyayan:** Even though the term originally means to **study the text**, but the reader cannot understand the true meanings of the words used by the Poets even in several attempts of reading as many archaic Sanskrit words have more than one meaning. Therefore, the reader needs to develop capability to read between the lines as well as between the words.
2. **मनन/ Manan:** It involves the **application of mind** to improve understanding of the views expressed by the Poets in the composed poems. The reader has to ask questions to oneself so as to try to probe the minds of the Poets to decode the **belief system** built by them.
3. **चिंतन/Chintan:** It reflects getting into the **deep thought process** so as to take penetrative look at the text to develop a list of the ideas within the mind of the reader and then to choose the best out of several alternatives that would take him/her closer to the truth. It gives whole picture of a story and also reveals the indent of the Poet from the content of the Verses/Hymns.

In **Ten Mandalas of Rigved**, there are about 25 rivers. A river of a particular region is generally considered as the “**Lifeline of that Region**” as it provides **water** to one and all but without expecting anything in return. Since old time, on the banks of many rivers of the world, different ancient civilizations /cultures have flourished. In the present essay, different aspects of **Saraswati** and **Sindhu** the two prominent rivers of **Rigved** have been discussed. Based on the information drawn from **Rigved**, its **Ten Mandalas** are divided into two classes as under.

- i. **Five Early Mandalas** -Rv-2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 are considered as the **Five Early Mandalas**.
- ii. **Five Late Mandalas** -Rv-5, 8, 9, 1 and 10 are treated as the **Five Late Mandalas**.

I. River Saraswati:

In general, **Vedic Experts** are unanimous on the point that river **Saraswati** is the most celebrated river of **Rigved**. This is based on the fact that in the **Ten Mandalas of Rigved**, the river has been mentioned for more than 70 times and there are **three hymns** exclusively dedicated to the river and those are **Rv-6.61**; **Rv-7.95**; and **Rv-7.96**. In the following paragraphs, we shall mainly discuss on the various aspects of river **Saraswati** as brought out by several Poets in their compositions [1].

Meaning of term **Saraswati**: Rigvedic word “सरस्/Saras” means **fluid, water, lake** and term “**wati**” means **having**. A Combination of these two words make a single word सरस्वती /**Saraswati** means "who has ponds, lakes, and pooling water" or “one with plenty of water”. Its practical meaning is “**Possessing Water**”.

1. Fixing Geographical Location of river Saraswati:

Although, among the several Vedic Scholars, there exists a very wide difference in deciding the exact Geographical Location of the ancient river **Saraswati** which is highly glorified in **Rigved**, but the **two contextual clues** provided by the Poets of the two different Mandalas make it possible to arrive at a decision to finalize its proper location. These two verses are- **Rv-10.75,5** and **Rv-3.23,4** [1].

Rv-10.75,5: *imaṃ me gaṅge yamune sarasvati śutudri stemam sacatā paruṣṇyā |*

asiknyā marudvṛdhe vitastayārjīkīye śṛṇuhyāsuṣomayā ||

RV-3.23,4: *ni tvā dadhe vara ā pṛthivyā iḷāyās pade sudinatve ahnām |*

dr̥ṣadvatyām mānuṣa āpayāyām sarasvatyām revadaghneditīhi ||

The Composer of the verse **Rv-10.75,5** has given a general view from above indicating how the main rivers of the eastern part of Rigvedic Territory have been placed with respective to each other. In other words, it provides aerial view of the geographical features of the eastern region that indicates the **relative geographic positions** or the order of the various rivers from the **east to west direction**. Based on the description given in the verse, it can be said that river **Saraswati** lies between the two prominent rivers of the region, and those are, river **Yamuna** located in the **east** and river **Sutudri** placed in the **west**.

The content of the verse **Rv-3.23,4** illustrates the finer details of that area as the Poet has highlighted other geographical features that are closely associated with river **Saraswati** such as river **Drisadvati**, river **Apaya** and the very special term **Ilaspade** that most likely

indicates name the locality (probably named after the pre-Rigvedic Ruler /Queen **ILA**). This description presents fuller picture and the actual geographical situation of that locality.

On the basis of above **two contextual clues**, it can be concluded that the ancient river **Saraswati** mentioned in **Rigved** is nothing but **Ghaggar** (in India) **Hakra** (in Pakistan) river that presently flows during the rainy season in the Indian state **Haryana**.

2. Saraswati as the Standard of Comparison:

Mandala-2 is the **Earliest Mandala of Rigved** and in the very first hymn, the Poet **Gritsamada** has briefly introduced several Deities known to him with their special qualities. In the verse given below, the Composer has clubbed four important Rigvedic Goddesses together and their names are **Aditi**, **Bharati**, **Ila** and **Saraswati** [1].

Rv-2.1,11: *tvamaghne aditirdeva dāśuṣe tvam hotrā bhāratī vardhaseghirā |*

tvamiḷā śatahimāsi dakṣase tvam vṛtrahū vasupate sarasvatī ||

Thou, God, art **Aditi** to him who offers gifts: thou, Hotri **Bharati**, art strengthened by the song.

Thou art the hundred-wintered **Ila** to give strength, Lord of Wealth! **Vrtra-slayer and Sarasvati**.

But the most striking observation here is the Poet has specifically denoted **Saraswati** as the **Vritra-Slayer**. It means to say that, at that point of time, **Saraswati** was definitely under **Vritra** effect (real Drought) and that is why the Composer expected from the beloved river to overcome the drought-like situation or **neutralize Vritra** (personification of drought).

Mandala-6 Poet in the verse **Rv-6.49,7** has hinted at the main source of water for the venerated river [1].

Rv-6.49,7: *pāvīravī kanyā citrāyuh sarasvatī vīrapatnī dhiyaṃ dhāt |*

ganābhirachidraṃ śaraṇaṃ sajoṣā durādharṣaṃ ghr̥ṇate śarma yaṃsat ||

So may **Sarasvati**, the Hero's Consort, brisk with rare life, the **lightning's Child**, inspire us,

And, with the Dames accordant, give the singer a refuge unassailable and flawless.

In the above verse the Composer has called **Saraswati** as **पावीरवी कन्या**/ the **daughter of lightning** indirectly means **she is surely rain dependent** and strictly speaking, lightning is seen only when the rain clouds gather in the sky. Hence, short fall in the seasonal rain or the change in rainfall pattern would have led to drought like (**Vritra** effect) situation in the region.

The most surprising thing is despite depiction of river **Saraswati** as the **Vritra-smiter**, in the verse **Rv-2.1,11**; still the same Composer in the verse **Rv-2,41,16** has termed the river as **अम्बितमे नदीतमे देवितमे सरस्वति** as described below [1, 2].

Rv-2.41,16: *ambitame nadītame devitame sarasvati* |

apraśastā iva smasi praśastimamba nas kṛdhi ||

Best Mother, best of Rivers, best of Goddesses, Sarasvati,

We are, as 'twere, of no repute and dear Mother, give thou us renown.

Content of the above verse manifests that as if the Composer has used **Saraswati** as the **yardstick** to compare **her capabilities** with other entities and then idolised this geographical character as the **best among the three different classes** i.e. **Mother, River, and Goddess**. Content of the verse also indicates that at that time, river **Saraswati was already well-known entity** and therefore, the Poet prays the river to **make him famous** like **her**.

3. Saraswati as described in the verses of the Late Mandalas:

As mentioned elsewhere, in the **Mandala-6** and **7** (the Two Early Mandalas), there are three hymns exclusively addressed to river **Saraswati**. This is because the Poets of the **Five Early Mandalas** had strong emotional bonding with the river as the generations of their ancestors were born and brought up on her banks. Also a long ago, on the bank of same river, their forefathers had conceived the **Early Part of Vedic Philosophy**. But in this section, we shall focus our attention mainly on the selected verses dedicated by the **Poets of the Late Mandalas** specifically to **Saraswati** so as to know their feelings about the river. It is to be borne in mind that the references selected for the discussion have been denoted as the **Active References** as the contents of these verses hint at the Poets were performing **Yajna** on the bank of river **Saraswati** at the time of composition [1].

Mandala-5 Verse indicate poor state of river Saraswati

Rv-5,43,11: *ā no divo brhataḥ parvatād ā sarasvatī yajatā ghantu yajñam* |

havam devī jujuṣāṇā ghṛtācī śaghmām no vācam uśatī śṛṇotu ||

From high heaven may **Sarasvati** the Holy visit our sacrifice, and from the mountain.

Eager, propitious, may the balmy Goddess hear our effectual speech, our invocation.

Comment: When the Poet was conducting **Yajna** rite on the bank of river **Saraswati**, then he appeals to the Goddess who is now in Heaven, to arrive at the place of **Yajna** in running condition to listen to his **Praise-Song**. It implicitly tells us that the river was in bad condition or as good as dried up. Therefore, the Composer felt that his beloved river has gone to Heaven.

Mandala-8 Verses also indicate bad condition of river Saraswati

Rv-8.21,17: *indro vā ghedīyan maghaṃ sarasvatī vā subhaghā dadirvasu |*
tvaṃ vā citra dāśuṣe ||

Indra or blest **Sarasvati** alone bestows such wealth, treasure so great, or thou,
O **Citra**, on the worshipper.

Rv-8.21,18: *citra id rājā rājakā idanyake yake sarasvatīmanu |*
parjanya iva tatanad dhi vṛṣṭyā sahasramayutā dadat ||

Citra is King, and only kinglings are the rest who dwell beside **Sarasvati**.

He, like Parjanya with his rain, hath spread himself with thousand, yea, with myriad gifts.

Comment: In the above two verses once again the Composer has pointed out the fact that on the bank of river **Saraswati**, now a very few noble people reside as there is very less water in the river and one among them is king **Chitra**. The Poet requests God **Indra** to bring rain through the act of god **Parjanya** so that the People belonging to Royal Families would continue their stay on the bank of **Saraswati**, then they would perform more **Yajna** and give various Gifts to the Priests.

Mandala-1 Verses manifesting Saraswati is being invoked at the time of Yajna

Rv-1.3,10: *pāvakā naḥ sarasvatī vājebhīrvājīnīvatī |yajñam vaṣṭu dhiyāvasuḥ ||*

Wealthy in spoil, enriched with hymns, may bright **Sarsavad** desire,
With eager love, our sacrifice.

Rv-1.3,11: *codayitrī sūnṛtānām cetantī sumatīnām |yajñam dadhe sarasvatī ||*

Inciter of all pleasant songs, **inspirer o all gracious thought**,
Sarasvati accept **our rite**.

Rv-1.3,12: *maho arṇaḥ sarasvatī pra cetayati ketunā |dhiyo viśvā vi rājati ||*

Sarasvati, the mighty flood, **she with be light illuminates**,
She brightens every pious thought.

Comment: Through the three verses given above, the Composer has invoked river **Saraswati** at the time of **Yajna** wherein he requests the river to accept the prayer that is inspired by her. The Poet further states that **Saraswati** regularly **gives pious thoughts** to the Priests and that is why he could compose this Poem of Praise. Hence he demand but also deserves the return gifts from her.

Saraswati in the eyes of Mandala-10 Poet [1. 2]

RV-10.17,7: *sarasvatīm devayanto havante sarasvatīmadhvare tāyamāne |*
sarasvatīm sukṛto ahvayanta sarasvatī dāśuṣe vāryam dāt ||

The pious call **Sarasvati**, they worship **Sarasvati** while sacrifice proceedeth.

The pious called **Sarasvati** aforetime. **Sarasvati** send bliss to him who giveth.

RV-10.17,8: *sarasvati yā saratham yayatha svadhābhirdevi pitrbhirmadantī |*
āsadyāsmīn barhiṣi mādayasvānamīvā iṣa ādhehyasme ||

Sarasvati, who camest with the **Fathers**, with them rejoicing thee in our oblations,

Seated upon this sacred grass be joyful, and give us strengthening food that brings no sickness.

RV-10.17,9: *sarasvatīm yām pitaro havante dakṣiṇā yajñamabhinakṣamāṇāḥ |*
sahasrārghamiḷo atra bhāgham rāyaspoṣam yajamāneṣu dhehi ||

Thou, called on as **Sarasvati** by Fathers who come right forward to our solemn service,

Give food and wealth to present **sacrificers**, a portion, worth a thousand, of refreshment.

Comment: In the above three verses as well, the Poet has lauded **Saraswati** at the time of **Yajna** ritual, but reminded her that his ancestors had close association with her and appeals her to bestow the worshippers with food, wealth, pious thoughts and also make free from sickness.

Note: In **Mandala-9**, there is no verse that brings out special attribute of **Saraswati**.

To summarize above discussion, the content of the verses belonging to the Four out of Five Late Mandalas clearly depict river **Saraswati** is being worshipped in the **Yajnas** conducted by different Poets at different times. The **Mandala-5** and **8** Poets in the pertaining verses have brought out pathetic condition of the river. But the **Mandala-1** and **10** Composers in the relevant verses did not comment on the water paucity in the river. It is quite possible during the period of the composition of the verses of the Last Two Mandalas, rain fall in the **Sapta-Sindhu** region would have improved considerably. Or the Composers of **Mandala-1** and **10** might have conducted **Yajnas** during rainy season and therefore, they did see water scarcity there. As usual, while invoking **Saraswati**, the Poets have placed their regular demands of wealth, food etc. but the most striking feature observed in the verses of the **Mandala-1** and **10** is the special mention of **Saraswati** as the **Pious Thought Giver**.

4. Saraswati praised in company with other Deities and Characters [1, 2]:

As mentioned earlier in **Rigved**, there are three hymns dedicated to **Saraswati** and though Goddesses like **Aditi**, **Ila** and **Bharati** figure in many verses of the text, but like **Saraswati**, no Poet has given very special treatment to any of these three Goddesses. In this section we shall concentrate only on the topic how river **Saraswati** has been admired along with other Deities in the different verses of the ancient document. **Table-1** provides information compiled from the **Ten Mandalas of Rigved** but that has been intentionally arranged starting with the Earliest Mandala (**Mandala-2**) to the Last Mandala (**Mandala-10**).

Table-1

Verse Number	Names of the Deities/Characters appear along with Saraswati
Rv-2.1,11	Aditi, Ila, Bharati (common Rigvedic Goddesses)
Rv-2.30,8	Maruts, Indra
Rv-2.32.8	Gungu, Sinivali, Raka, Indrani, Varunani (uncommon Goddesses)
Rv-3.23,4	Drisadvati, Apaya (rivers of Ilaspade region/Haryana)
Rv-3.54,13	Maruts
Rv-6.50,12	Rudra, Visnu, Vayu, Ribhuksan, Vaja, divine Vidhatar, Parjanya, Vata
Rv-6.54,6	Indra, Parjanya, Agni, Herbs
Rv-7.9,5	Agni, Maruts, Asvins, Waters, All Gods
Rv-7.35,11	All Gods who reside in Heaven, Earth, Waters
Rv-7.39,5	Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Agni, Aryaman, Aditi, Visnu, Maruts
Rv-7.40,3	Maruts, Agni
Rv-5.42,12	Brihaddiva, Raka, Rivers, wives of bull (?)
Rv-5.46,2	Agni, Indra, Varuna, Mitra, Marut, Visnu, Nasatyas, Rudra, Heavenly Goddesses, Pusan, Bhaga
Rv-8.38,10	Agni, Indra
Rv-8.54,4	Pusan, Visnu, the Seven Streams, Waters, Wind, the Mountains, Forest-Lord, Earth
Rv-9.81,4	Pusan, Pavamana, Varuna, Mitra, Maruts, Asvins, Vayu, Brhaspati, Savitar, Tvastar,
Rv-1.89,3	Bhaga, Daksa, Mitra, Aditi Aryaman, Varuna, Soma, Asvins
Rv-10.64,9	Sindhu, Sarayu (rivers defined as the mothers and divine beings)
Rv-10.65,1	Agni, Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Aryaman, Vayu, Pusan, Adityas, Maruts, Visnu, Soma, Sky, Rudra, Aditi, Brahmanaspati
Rv-10.65,13	Thunder, Aja-Ekapad, Sindhu, Sea waters, All Gods, Dhi, Purandhi
Rv-10.75,5	Ganga, Yamuna, Sutudri, Parushni, Asikni, Marudvrdha, Vitasta, Arjikiya, Susoma
Rv-10.131,5	Asvins, Indra
Rv-10.141,5	Aryaman, Indra, Brhaspati, Vata, Visnu, Savitar
Rv-10.184,2	Sinivali, Asvins

General Comments on the verses pertaining to river Saraswati

1. Three hymns, **Rv-6.61; Rv-7.95 and Rv-7.96** dedicated to **Saraswati** are not included in the **Table-1**.

2. Content of the **Mandala-8** verses, **Rv-8.21,17 and 18** exhibit different tone as in them, the Poet has requested god **Indra** to bring the rain through the act **Parjanya** so that very a few noble People who now dwell on the bank of river **Saraswati** would continue to live there and then praise the Gods by performing more Yajnas, and hence not considered in **Table-1**.

3. **Vasishta**, the Lead Composer in the verse **Rv-7.36,6** has specifically called river **Saraswati** as सरस्वती सप्तथी सिन्धुमाता/ *sarasvatī saptathī sindhumātā* practically means **one out of the seven mother streams** or **rivers** but some scholars purposely interpret the term **Sindhu-Mata** as river **Sindhu**.

Rv-7.36,6: *ā yat sākam yaśaso vāvaśānāḥ sarasvatī saptathī sindhumātā |*

yāḥ suṣvayanta sudughāḥ sudhārā abhi svena payasā pīpyānāḥ ||

Coming together, glorious, loudly roaring - **Sarasvati**, Mother of Floods, the seventh-

With copious milk, with fair streams, strongly flowing, full swelling with the volume of their water;

4. But in the verse **Rv-8.54,4**; use of a very special phrase सरस्वत्यवन्तु सप्त सिन्धवः/ *sarasvatyavantu sapta sindhavaḥ* actually manifests at the time of invocation during **Yajna**, the Poet has treated **Saraswati** and **Sapta-Sindhavaḥ** separately as the region of **Seven Rivers**.

Rv-8.54,4: *pūṣā viṣṇurhavanam me sarasvatyavantu sapta sindhavaḥ |*

āpo vātaḥ parvatāso vanaspatīḥ śṛṇotu pṛthivī havam ||

May Pusan, Visnu, and Sarasvati befriend, and the Seven Streams, this call of mine:

May Waters, Wind, the Mountains, and the Forest-Lord, and Earth give ear unto my cry.

Please note that **Rv-8,54** is the part of **Valakhilya hymns** that were composed lately.

5. In **Mandala-10** hymn is basically addressed to **Waters and Sons of Water (Apam Napat)** wherein the Poet in the verse **Rv-10.30,12** expects from **Saraswati** to give him longer life.

Rv-10.30,12: *āpo revatīḥ kṣayathā hi vasvaḥ kratum ca bhadrambibhṛthāmṛtaṁ ca |*

rāyaśca stha svapatyasya patnīḥsarasvatī tad grṇate vayo dhāt ||

For, **wealthy Waters**, ye control all treasures: ye bring **auspicious intellect and Amṛta**.

Ye are the Queens of independent riches **Sarasvati** give full life to the singer!

Verses 7 to 11 imply that **Indra** has saved **Waters** and **Rivers** of the region from the long duration water scarcity problem means condition of rainfall has improved considerably. The Poet of the hymn **Rv-1.164 (Riddle hymn)** has also expressed similar views about river **Saraswati**, rainfall, and the availability and importance of water for the living beings.

II. River Sindhu:

There is ambiguity about the **Rigvedic** term **Sindhu** as the Poets in many hymns of the text, have used the term in different contexts. This is because the archaic Sanskrit word **Sindhu** has several meanings and some of them are as under [3].

- **Sindhu** means any stream, river, flood (Generic term) or **Nadi** (common name in Sanskrit).
- **Sindhu** is applicable to **river Sindhu** (Proper noun/ the name of main river of Pakistan).
- **Sindhu** also means Ocean or Sea or a large Water body.

There are several Vedic Experts, most of them are the backers of the **Aryas Migration Theory (AMT)** selectively interpret its meaning at their will or as they feel without taking into account the context of its application as their primary aim is to promote their narratives. In this section we will try to know what the Poets have said about river **Sindhu**.

1. Geographical Location of river Sindhu:

The Last Mandala Poet in the verse **Rv-10.75,6** has given proper information on the several rivers of western region of Rigvedic Territory which implies that river **Sindhu** is nothing but the longest river that flows in present-day Pakistan [1].

Rv-10.75,6: *tr̥ṣṭāmayā prathamam yātave sajūḥ sasartvā rasayāśvetyā tyā |*

*tvaṃ **sindho** kubhayā gomatīm krumummehatnvā saratham yābhirīyase ||*

First with Trstama thou art eager to flow forth, with Rasa, and Susartu, and with Svetya here,

With Kubha; and with these, **Sindhu** and Mehatnu, thou seekest in thy course Krumu and Gomati.

2. Earliest Reference of river Sindhu:

Out of the **Five Early Mandalas**, only the Poet of the **Mandala-4** has first time included river **Sindhu** in his composition. It is strange but fact that **Mandala-4** is the only Rigvedic Mandala wherein there is no mention of river **Saraswati** in its all **58 hymns [1]**.

The verse **Rv-4.43,6** that provides direct evidence of river **Sindhu** is given below.

Rv-4.43,6: *sindhur ha vām rasayā siñcad asvān ghr̥ṇā vayo 'ruśāsaḥ pari ghman |*

tad ū ṣu vām ajiram ceti yānam yena patī bhavathaḥ sūryāyāḥ ||

Let **Sindhu** with his wave bedew your horses: in fiery glow have the red birds come hither.

Observed of all was that your rapid going, whereby ye were the Lords of Surya's Daughter.

3. River Sindhu lauded with other Deities/Characters [1. 2]:

Similar to river **Saraswati**, Rigvedic Poets in many verses have honoured river **Sindhu** along with Other Rigvedic Deities or the Entities. **Table-2** gives information on the same.

Table-2

Verse Number	Names of the Deities/Characters appear along with Sindhu
Rv-4.43,6	Rasa (river), Asvins (as master of Suryaa/the daughter of Sun)
Rv-4.54,6	Savitar, Indra, Heaven, Earth, Aditi, Adityas
Rv-4.55,3	Aditi, Nakta/Night, Usha/Dawn
Rv-5,53,9	Rasa, Kubha, Krumu, Anitabha, Sarayu (rivers of western region)
Rv-8.20,25	Maruts, Asikni (river), Mountain, Sea
Rv-8.25,12	Visnu
Rv-8.25,14	Maruts, Visnu, Indra, Asvins
Rv-9.97,58	Soma, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.94,16	Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.95,11	Agni, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.96,9	Agni, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.98,3	Vaisvanara (Agni), Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.100,9	Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.101,11	Maruts, Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.102,11	Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.103,8	Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.105,19	Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.106,7	Aditi, Mitra, Varuna, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.107,3	Indra, Savitar, Aryaman, Agni, Varuna, Mitra, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.108,13	Indra, Agni, Varuna, Mitra, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.109,8	Indra, Agni, Varuna, Mitra, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.110,9	Indra, Ribhus, Varuna, Mitra, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.111,5	Ribhu, Vaja, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.112,25	Asvins, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.113,20	Usha/Dawn, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.114,11	Rudra, Maruts, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.115,6	Surya/Sun, Mitra, Varuna, Aditi, Heaven, Earth
Rv-1.122,6	Mitra, Varuna
Rv-10.64,9	Saraswati, Sarayu (rivers)
Rv-10.65,13	Thunder, Aja-Ekapad, Saraswati, Sea waters, All Gods, Dhi, Purandhi
Rv-10.66,11	Sea, Aja-Ekapada, All Gods, Mid-space, Ahi Budhanya,
Rv-10.75,6	Tristama, Sweta, Susarta, Rasa, Kubha, Gomati, Mehatanu, Krumu (rivers of west)

General Remarks on the verses of the hymn Rv-10.75 related to River Sindhu

- As per the information available in **Rigved**, there is no hymn exclusively devoted to river **Sindhu**. But if we take out the two verses (verse-5 and 6) from the hymn **Rv-10.75** that distinctly talk about the names of various rivers of eastern and western areas of **Rigvedic Territory**, then with the remaining seven verses of the hymn **Rv-10.75**, that hymn would automatically become the only hymn addressed to **Sindhu**.
- In the dedicated verses belonging to hymn **Rv-10.75**; river **Sindhu** has been described as the as the river that surpasses all the streams known to the Poet. In the very first verse **Rv-10.75,1**; the Composer has used the phrase **Sapta-Sapta Tredha** (7x7 plus 3=52 (weeks?), daily very busy like present-day term **24x7x52**) to describe **her** regularity and then compared her flow strength with the Bull who makes the roaring sound while traveling on Earth. Additionally, the Poet has lauded river **Sindhu** as the true winner or the front runner in the race means no other river can match her capability/power.
- Similar to river **Saraswati**, in some verses/hymns of **Rigved**, river **Sindhu** is treated as the mother. Two references that are given below indicate the Poetic presentation of river **Sindhu** as the **Mother** (see verses **Rv-1.46,2** and **Rv-10.75,4**) [1].

Rv-1.46,2: *yā dasrā sindhumātarā manotarā rayīṇām | dhiyā devā vasuvidā ||*

Additionally, in the verse **Rv-10.75,4** the Poet has designated **Sindhu** as **Mother**.

Rv-10.75,4: *abhi tvā sindho śīsumin na mātaro vāśrā arṣantipayaseva dhenavaḥ |
rājeva yudhvā nayasi tvamit sicaṇ yadāsāmaghram pravatāminakṣasi ||*

Like **mothers** to their calves, like milch kine with their milk, so, **Sindhu**, unto thee the roaring rivers run.

Thou leadest as a warrior king thine army's wings what time thou comest in the van of these swift streams.

Even in the verse **Rv-10.35,2**; the Poet has called **water streams**/rivers as mother.

Rv-10.35,2: *divasprthivyorava ā vṛṇīmahe mātṛn sindhūn parvatāñcharyaṇāvataḥ |
anāghāstvam sūryamuśāsamīmahe bhadramsomaḥ suvāno adyā kṛṇotu naḥ ||*

Yea, for ourselves we claim the grace of Heaven and Earth, of Saryanavan, of the Hills and **Mother Streams**.

For innocence we pray to Surya and to Dawn. So may the flowing Soma bring us bliss today.

Additionally, in the verse **Rv-10.17,10** **waters** are denoted as the **mothers** (अपो अस्मान मातरः).

- In the verse **Rv-10.75,7** the Poet has praised **her** as the white shining but independent stream that is very busy as **she** constantly carries plenty water without any interruption in full year. Hence the Composer feels that flowing **Sindhu** is the treat to watch.

3. River **Sindhu** and River **Rasa** go hand in hand:

Alike the word **Sindhu**, there is another term **Rasa** that often creates confusion in the mind of the reader as it has more than one meaning [1, 3]. **Rasa** is the name of western region river but the several Poets have also used the same term for **Juice** (Soma) in many places. There are more than **sixty** references of the word **Rasa** and its derivatives in many hymns of **Rigved**, but the **Mandala-9** Composers have mostly applied the said term to indicate **Purified Soma Juice** which is also known as **Soma Pavamana**. But the most striking observation is, river **Sindhu** and river **Rasa** are found in the same **Six Mandalas of Rigved**, and hence both rivers can be termed as a pair that is closely connected. Following verses depict river **Sindhu** and river **Rasa** are walk along with each other [1, 2, 3].

References highlighting river **Sindhu** and **Rasa** together

Rv-4.43,6: ***sindhur** ha vām **rasayā** siñcad aśvān ghr̥ṇā vayo 'ruṣāsaḥ pari ghman |*
tad ū ṣu vām ajiraṃ ceti yānaṃ yena patī bhavathaḥ sūryāyāḥ ||

Rv-5,53,9: *mā vo **rasā**nitabhā kubhā krumur mā vaḥ **sindhur** ni rīramat |*
mā vaḥ pari ṣṭhāt sarayuh purīṣiṇy asme it sumnam astu vaḥ ||

Rv-10.75,6: *tr̥ṣṭāmayā prathamam yātave sajūḥ sasartvā **rasayā**śvetyā tyā |*
*tvaṃ **sindho** kubhayā gomatīm krumummehatnvā saratham yābhirīyase ||*

Above three verses belonging to three different Mandalas illustrate that river **Sindhu** and river **Rasa** are placed together in the same verses and the names are shown in bold letters.

Additionally, in **Mandala-8 hymn-72**, river **Sindhu** is noticed in the **verse-7** and river **Rasa** is found in the **verse-13**.

Moreover, in **Mandala-9**, river **Sindhu** is present in the verse **Rv-9.96,7; Rv-9.97,45** and **Rv-9.97,58** and river **Rasa** in **Rv-9,41,6**.

Besides, river **Sindhu** finds her place in some verses of **Mandala-1**; e.g. **Rv-1.122,6; Rv-1.126,1; Rv-1.186,5** and in the last line of the verses, **Rv-1.94-96; 98; 100 to 103** and **105 to 115**, but river **Rasa** is mentioned only in the verse **Rv-1.112,12**.

In other words, the Mandalas wherein river **Sindhu** is found, in same Mandalas river **Rasa** is also present. This compiled information makes it clear that both rivers, **Sindhu** and **Rasa** are placed together in **Six out of Ten Mandalas: Mandala-4, 5, 8, 9, 1 and 10**.

III. Attestation of *Saraswati* as Goddess but no place for *Sindhu* in the *Apri* Hymns:

In **Rigved**, there are **Ten Apri Hymns** but the **Three** out of **Ten Mandalas** do not contain **Apri Sukta** and they are **Mandala-4, 6 and 8**. Surprisingly, the Composers of **Mandala-4** and **6** are from the **Angirasa** clan and most of the hymns of **Mandala-8** are composed by the Poets belonging to **Kanva** and **Angirasa** Families. Most beautiful part of these **Ten Hymns** is the inclusion of three prominent Goddesses either in the **verse-8** or **9**. **Saraswati, Ila** and **Bharati** are collectively known as **Tisro Devih** or **Three Goddesses** who appear in different orders as given **Table-3**. The arrangement of the **Ten Apri Hymns** mentioned in **Table-3** is based on the composition of the order of Rigvedic Mandalas given as: **Mandala-2, 3, 7, 5, 9, 1 and 10** [1].

Table-3

Mandala number	Verse Number	Goddesses mentioned in the pertaining verse
2	Rv-2.3,8	Saraswati, Ila, Bharati/ <i>Tisro Devih</i>
3	Rv-3.4,8	Bharati, Ila, Saraswati/ <i>Tisro Devih</i>
7	Rv-7.2,8	Bharati, Ila, Saraswati/ <i>Tisro Devih</i>
5	Rv-5.5,8	Ila, Saraswati, Mahi/ <i>Tisro Devih</i>
9	Rv-9.5,8	Bharati, Saraswati, Ila, Mahi/ <i>Tisro Devih</i> and Pavamana (as a special appearance?)
1	Rv-1.13,9	Ila, Saraswati, Mahi/ <i>Tisro Devih</i>
1	Rv-1.142,9	Ila, Saraswati, Mahi
1	Rv-1.188,8	Bharati, Ila Saraswati
10	Rv-10.70,8	Ila / <i>Tisro Devih</i>
10	Rv-10.110.8	Bharati, Ila, Saraswati/ <i>Tisro Devih</i>

But the most fascinating part of these **Ten Apri Suktas** is, there is no place for river **Sindhu** in them despite the fact that in the **Six out of Ten Mandalas**, river **Sindhu** is admired as the **Goddess** along with Other Deities (see **Table-2**) as well as the **Mother** by many Poets. As discussed earlier, especially in the seven verses of Hymn **Rv-10.75**; river **Sindhu** is highly glorified by the Composer and yet the Poets of the **Two Apri Hymns** of **Mandala-10** did not mention **Sindhu** in either of these **Apri Suktas** of **Mandala-10**. It is strange but fact that even the Poets of these **Ten Hymns** intentionally did not use the word **Sindhu** in a single verse, as if, they did not want to create confusion in the minds of the listeners (now readers).

Here the most surprising thing is, in all **eleven verses** of the **Apri Hymn** of **Mandala-9**, we find incorporation of the term **Pavamana** though it is conspicuously absent in the earlier

composed **six Family Mandalas** of **Rigved**. It means to say that although the word **Pavamana** appears to be a lately coined or a new term that is noticed once in **Mandala-8** verse **Rv-8.101,14** and more than **240 times** in **Mandala-9**, but the Poet of **Apri Sukta- Rv-9.5** [1, 2] (see the hymn given below) has paid special attention to it and hence purposely placed it in every verse. It is not understood why the Poets of **Four Late Mandalas** (**Mandala-5; 9; 1; and 10**) who composed **seven Apri Suktas**, totally ignored river **Sindhu** but did not forget river **Saraswati** even though the **Mandala-9** was composed in the **Extreme North-west** corner of **Rigvedic Territory** that was located to west side of river **Sindhu**.

Hymn Rv-9.5 : Apri Sukta of Mandala-9

*samiddho viśvatas patih **pavamāno** vi rājati | prīṇan vṛṣā kanikradat || 1*
*tanūnapāt **pavamānaḥ** śṛṅghe śīsāno arṣati | antarikṣeṇa rārajat || 2*
*īḷenyaḥ **pavamāno** rayirvi rājati dyumān | madhordhārābhirojasā || 3*
*barhiḥ prācīnamojasā **pavamāna** strīṇan hariḥ | deveṣu deva īyate || 4*
*udātairjihate br̥had dvāro devīrhiranyayīḥ | **pavamānena** suṣtutāḥ || 5*
*suśilpe br̥hatī mahī **pavamāno** vṛṣanyati | naktoṣāsā nadarśate || 6*
*ubhā devā nṛcakṣasā hotārā daivyā huve | **pavamāna** indrovṛṣā || 7*
***bhārati** **pavamānasya** **sarasvatīlā mahī** | imaṃ no yajñamā gaman **tisro devīḥ** supeśasaḥ || 8*
*tvaṣṭāramaghrajām gopām puroyāvānamā huve | indurindro vṛṣā hariḥ **pavamānaḥ** prajāpatiḥ || 9*
*vanaspatiṃ **pavamāna** madhvā samaṅghdhi dhārayā |*
sahasravalśaṃ haritaṃ bhrājamānaṃ hiranyayam || 10
*viśve devāḥ svāhākṛtiṃ **pavamānasyā** ghata | vāyurbṛhaspatiḥ sūryo. aghnirindrah sajośasaḥ || 11*

A close look at the hymn **Rv-9.5** reveals the fact that in all **eleven verses**, the term **Pavamana** (shown in **bold**) is invariably present but the Rigvedic words **Soma** and **Sindhu** are absent. Also, the inclusion of **Pavamana** word in the **verse-8** along with the group of regular Goddesses **Bharati**, **Saraswati**, **Ila** and **Mahi** and mention of the established phrase **Tisro Devih** depict Poet's unfailing love for these **Goddesses** and additionally for **Pavamana**.

Rv-9.5,8: भारती पवमानस्य सरस्वतीळा मही । इमं नो यज्ञमा गमन तिस्रो देवीः सुपेशसः ॥

In sum, the Poets of Apri hymns that belong to the **Four Late Mandalas** continued the tradition of their ancestors of praising the **Three Goddesses** including **Saraswati** either in the **verse-8** or **9** of these hymns, but did not give place to river **Sindhu** in their compositions despite the fact that their colleagues have acclaimed river **Sindhu** separately as Goddess earlier. The most striking observation is the inclusion of **Pavamana** word in the verse **Rv-9.5,8**.

IV. Comparing the Wealth and Health issues on East and West sides of river Sindhu:

In the beginning, we will discuss about the rivers (the most important geographical features of East and West sides of Rigvedic Territory) that are reported by the various Poets in **Mandala-5** and **8**; the Two Late Mandalas of **Rigved** [1, 2, 3].

Based on the information drawn from the **Five Early Mandalas**, with the exception of a part of **Mandala-4**, other **Four Early Mandalas** (**Mandala-2, 3, 6** and **7**) were composed in the eastern area of Rigvedic Territory mostly adjoining the eastern region important rivers like **Saraswati, Sutudri, Vipas, Parushni, Yamuna** and **Ganga**. After the victory in the **War of Ten Kings**, when the Poet of **Mandala-7** personally visited **Puru's country** i.e., upstream part of river **Saraswati** where he noticed precarious state of river **Saraswati**, then the members of the Priestly Community decided to relocate themselves to west of river **Sindhu** during the latter part of **Mandala-5** (in **Mandala-5**, some references of the eastern rivers are found in the middle hymns; river **Saraswati**: **42,12**; **43,11**; and **46,2**; river **Parushni**: **52,9** and **Yamuna**: **52,17**).

The relocation of the Priests is manifested by the presence of the names of **six rivers** of the **western** region in the single verse **Rv-5.53,9** and those are **Sindhu, Kubha, Krumu, Rasa, Sarayu, Anitabha**. Additionally, in the **first 30 hymns of Mandala-8**, river **Sindhu** appears six times (see verses- **Rv-8.12,3**: **Sindhu** flows like a chariot; **Rv-8.20,24**: **Sindhu** river; **Rv-8.20,25**: **Sindhu** and **Asikni**; **Rv-8.25,12**: **Sindhu** a self-moving entity; **Rv-8.25,14**: **Sindhu** as flood and **Rv-8.26,18**: **Sindhu** has golden path). Also another western region river **Gomati** is noticed in the verse **Rv-8.24,30**. Hence there is no ambiguity about the east to west movement of the Priests during **Mandala-5** which is supported by early **Mandala-8** references. Besides, **Mandala-8** Poet has mentioned river **Saraswati** in the verses **Rv-8.21,17** and **18**.

In other word, even though the generations of the Rigvedic Priests were the die-hard fans of river **Saraswati**, but because of drying up of the their beloved river due to rain deficiency (**Vritra** effect) compelled them to shift to west side of river **Sindhu** most likely during the late part of **Mandala-5**. Hence it would be interesting to know about the differences in the living conditions prevailed in the Eastern and Western parts of Rigvedic Territory during the entire Rigvedic Period but specifically brought out by the Poets of Late Mandalas.

1. Dana-Stuti Yajnas on the east and west sides of river Sindhu [1, 2]:

The references of **Dana-Stuti Yajnas** are found in the hymns composed in praise of the **Donor** for giving the gifts to Priests who could be a **Warrior King** or any **Noble person**.

a. Special Yajnas mentioned in the Five Early Mandalas:

During the period of the composition of the **Five Early Mandalas**, the **five kings** of the Bharata clan were the patrons of the Early Vedic Philosophy. When the Priests performed **special Yajnas** for the **leaders of Bharata tribe** at that particular period lived mostly on the east side of river **Sindhu**, then the Poets from the **Five Different Families** who composed these five Mandalas termed the **Special Yajnas** as the **Agni of Bharata(s)** or **Bharata's Agni** (**Griffith** Translation) in their compositions. The earliest reference of independently performed **Yajna** is noticed in the **Mandala-2** verses **Rv-2.7.1** and **5** meant for king **Bharata**. In the **Mandala-3** verse **Rv-3.23,3**, there is the mention of **Devavata's Agni** (the leader of **Bharata tribe** during the **Mandala-3** period). But **Vamadeva**, **Bharadvaja**, and **Vasistha** the **Lead Composers** of **Mandala-4, 6, and 7** respectively have properly described the **special Yajnas** conducted for **Bharata kings Somaka Sahadeva, Divodasa and Sudasa** in the hymns **Rv-4.15** (verses 7 to 10); **Rv-6.47** (verses 22 to 25); and **Rv-7.18** (verses-22 to 25) respectively. Please note that alongside the **Donor's name**, the Poets of **Mandala-4, 6 and 7** have also mentioned name of the **Father** of that **Bharata king** in the pertaining verse/hymn.

b. Special Yajnas found in Mandala-5 and 8, the Two Late Mandalas:

With the exception of a few references in **Mandala-5** (see **Rv-5.11,1**; and **Rv-5.54,14**), there is no **active reference** of **Bharata tribe** in the other Late Mandalas. But after the convincing defeat in the **War of Ten Kings** at the hand of **Bharata king Sudasa** and his ally **Trutsu**, the leaders of the **Five Tribes of Nahushas** become the favourite of the Priestly Community, and hence in the hymns of Late Mandalas we find many references of **special Yajnas** being conducted for the kings of **Puru, Turvasa, Yadu** tribes. On the other hand, **Mandala-5** and **8** Poets in a few hymns have talked about the **participation in Yajna** of **Anu** and **Druhyu** tribes. After **Mandala-8**, **Anu** and **Druhyu** tribes go missing and their names appear only once as a collective reference in the verse **Rv-1.108,8** with **Puru, Turvasa, Yadu**.

However, in the Late Mandalas, there are references of the conduction of **special Yajnas** on both sides of river **Sindhu**. Content of the hymn **Rv-5.27** indicates that a **special Yajna** was organised for the two Royal persons namely, **Tryaruna** (verses-1 to 3) and **Ashvamedha** (verses-4 to 6). But the Poet has linked **Tryaruna** to **Trasadasyu** (descendant?) as the latter is generally presented as the son of **Purukutsa** and hence it can be said that **Yajna for Puru** king would have been conducted in the eastern part of Rigvedic Territory. In the verses **Rv-5.30.12 to 15**; there is reference of **Dana-stuti Yajna** conducted in the name of **Rnancaya** the king of **Rusamas** whose origin is not clear.

Similarly, verses **Rv-8.21,17-18** do manifest that the Composer travelled from the west to east of river Sindhu and visited the area adjoining river **Saraswati** and performed **Yajna** for the king **Chitra** and other noble persons who lived on the bank of river **Saraswati**.

But the most striking observation about the **Mandala-8**, there are **maximum numbers** of **Dana-Stuti Yajnas** performed to laud the several **new Donors** as many of them do not figure in the **Five Earlier Mandalas**. Hence it can be said that the majority of these **Yajnas** would have been conducted on the west side of river **Sindhu**. **Table-4** gives information on the verses composed by the Rigvedic Poets to praise the **Donors** on the occasions of the **Special Yajnas Performed** but after receiving various gifts from them [1, 2].

Table-4: Important Dana-stuti Yajnas mentioned in Mandala-8

Verse Numbers	Names of the Donor (s) as appear in the related verses
Rv-8.1,30 to 34	Paramajya , Ninditasva , Prapathi , the son of Yadu (who?), Svanadratha the son of Asanga , and Asanga the son of Playoga
Rv-8.2,40 to 42	Vibhindu (who? not clear)
Rv-8.3,21 to 24	Pakasthaman the son of Kaurayan
Rv-8.4,19 to 21	Kurunga belonging to Turvasa tribe (?)
Rv-8.5,37 to 39	Kasu , the son of Chedi
Rv-8.6,46 to 48	Parsu , Tirindira from the tribe of Yadava
Rv-8.19,36 to 37	Trasadasyu the son of Purukutsa (on the bank of river Suvastu)
Rv-8.21,17 to 18	Chitra (on the bank of river Saraswati)
Rv-8.24,28 to 30	Varo Susaman (on the bank of river Gomati)
Rv-8.25,22 to 24	Uksanyayana , Harayana , Susaman
Rv-8.46,21 to 24	Prthusravas the son of Kanita
Rv-8.46,29 to 33	Balbutha Taruksa
Rv-8.55,2 to 5	Praskanva (after receiving gifts from Dasyave Vrika of hymn-56)
Rv-8.56,1 to 5	Dasyave Vrika the son of Putakratu (read hymn-56 earlier to 55)
Rv-8.65,10 to 12	Descendants of Durgaha (Purus ? As the verse Rv-4,42,8 describes Durgaha as the father of Purukutsa . See Rv-8.64,10 for term Puru)
Rv-8.68,14 to 19	Indrota ; Riksha's son ; Asvamedha's son ; Athitigva's son
Rv-8.70,13 to 15	Sara the son of Suradeva
Rv-8.74,13 to 15	Srutarvan the son of Riksha (on the bank of river Parushni ?)

Note: In the hymns **Rv-1.125** and **126**; there is reference of **Dana-stuti Yajna** conducted for the king **Bhavya** who lives on the bank of river **Sindhu** [1].

As seen from the **Table-4**, majority of the patrons of the **Special Yajnas** are from the new tribes or communities whose names are not found in the **Five Early Mandalas**. Some of the **Donors** are the descendants of the original leaders of the **Puru**, **Turvasa** and **Yadu** tribes who form the important constituents of the **Five Tribes of Rigved** [1].

Even though one reference indicates **Yajna** is conducted on the bank of river **Saraswati** (**Rv-8.21,17-18**), but from the several instances of river **Sindhu** in the first 30 hymns hints at most of the **Yajnas** are performed on the west side of river **Sindhu**. Please remember that among the **All Ten Mandalas** of the text, **maximum numbers** of **Dana-stuti Yajnas** are found in **Mandala-8**; and this Mandala belongs to the category of the **Five Late Mandalas**.

In all probabilities, due to availability of water in river **Sindhu** throughout the year, the People who lived in the western region of Rigvedic Territory would have been enjoying better living conditions in terms of the animal and material wealth as compared to their eastern counterparts. Same thing has been described in the verse **Rv-10.75,8** given below [1].

Rv-10.75,8: *svaśvā sindhuḥ surathā suvāsā hiranyayī sukṛtāvājīnīvātī |*

ūrṇāvatī yuvatīḥ sīlamāvatyutādhi vastesubhaghā madhuvṛdham ||

Rich in good steeds is **Sindhu**, **rich in cars and robes**, rich in gold, nobly-fashioned, rich in **ample wealth**.

Blest Silamavati and young Urnavati invest themselves with raiment rich in store of sweets.

From the content of the above verse it is crystal clear that the richness the people who resided on the west side is due to perennial river **Sindhu**. Please bear in mind that the Royal or Noble people mostly donated animals like cows, bulls/oxen, asvas/race quality bulls, sheep, goats, woolly ewes, dogs, asses/donkeys, camels etc. But out of these animals, **camel** is not at all mentioned in any of the hymns of **Five Early Mandalas**. Therefore, presence of **camel** in some early hymns of **Mandala-8** (see verses **Rv-8.5,37**; **Rv-8.6,48** first; and then **Rv-8.46,22**; **Rv-8.46,29**) as the object of donation in **Dana-stuti Yajnas** strengthens the case of **western region location** for most of these **Yajnas**. Other gifts received by the Priests include gold, chariots, tanned hides, bamboo, slaves, ladies/maids (?), garments, Soma, food grains etc.

From the above discussion it can be stated that the names of unfamiliar tribe leaders of **Mandala-8** who dwelt in the western area were well off as there was no paucity of water in that locality. Hence they could afford to give many gifts in the **Special Yajnas**.

2. Availability of Ashva/Asva on both sides of river Sindhu:

Ashva/Asva is one of the most debated characters of **Rigved**, and the issue needs to be addressed in a different fashion as there is no unanimity about the existence of this character either during the **Early Harappan** and **Mature Harappan** phases. Missing concrete evidence of the skeletal bones of the **True Horse** during the **Mature Harappan** phase makes it difficult to attest its presence since beginning of the **Harappan Civilization**.

However, some scholars believe that **Asva** or the **True Horse** did arrive in the Indian Sub-continent from outside during the **decline phase** of **Harappan Civilization**. This is based on the excavated remains of the **True Horse** (*Equus caballus*) of the time of **Gandhara Grave** or **Cemetery H** culture found in **Pakistan**. Keeping the term **Asva** as it is, we shall restrict our discussion on the selected references of **Asva** found in **Rigved** on both sides of river **Sindhu**.

Verses linking presence of the term Asva with “Sindhu and Yamuna”

Western River Sindhu and Asva

As discussed elsewhere, information available in Rigved clearly shows that river **Sindhu** is located in the western region of Rigvedic Territory. One reference from the Mandala-4 (**Rv-4.43,6**; one of the Early Mandalas) and another from the Last Mandala (**Rv-10.75,8**) depict that **Sindhu** is famous for **Asvas** [1].

Rv-4.43,6: *sindhur ha vāṃ rasayā siñcad aśvān ghrṇā vayo 'ruśāsah pari ghman |*

tad ū ṣu vām ajiraṃ ceti yānaṃ yena patī bhavathaḥ sūryāyāḥ ||

Let **Sindhu** with his wave bedew **your horses**: in fiery glow have the red birds come hither.

Observed of all was that your rapid going, whereby ye were the Lords of Surya's Daughter.

Rv-10.75,8: *svaśvā sindhuḥ surathā suvāsā hiranyayī sukr̥tāvājīnīvātī |*

ūrṇāvātī yuvatīḥ sīlamāvatyutādhi vastesubhaghā madhuvṛdham ||

Rich in good steeds is **Sindhu**, rich in cars and robes, rich in gold, nobly-fashioned, rich in ample wealth.

Blest Silamavati and young Urnavati invest themselves with raiment rich in store of sweets.

Above two references clearly indicate that area adjacent to river **Sindhu** was known for the best quality **Asvas** (also refer to hymn **Rv-1.126** that describes that king **Bhavya** who lived on the bank of river **Sindhu** donated hundred **Asvas** to Poet **Kakshivan** in a **Special Yajna**). It means to say that the region located to west side of river **Sindhu** was rich in animals like Cows, Asvas, Camels, Sheep etc. and the same thing has been explained in the earlier section of **Special** or **Dana-stuti Yajnas**.

Eastern River Yamuna and Asva

In the earlier part, we have discussed about presence of **Asvas** in Western region, but in this part we shall see the availability of **Asvas** in the Eastern region of Rigvedic Territory. Here we will study two references of river **Yamuna** found in the both classes of the Ten Mandalas.

RV-7.18,19: *āvadindram yamunā trtsavaśca prātra bhedaṃ sarvatātāmuṣāyat |*

ajāsaśca śighravo yakṣavaśca baliṃ śīrṣāṇi jabhruraśvyāni ||

आवदिन्द्रं यमुना तर्त्सवश्च परात्र भेदं सर्वतातामुषायत ।

अजासश्च शिग्रवो यक्षवश्च बलिं शीर्षाणि जभ्रुरश्व्यानि ॥

Yamuna and the Trtsus aided Indra. There he stripped **Bheda** bare of all his treasures.

The **Ajas** and the **Sigrus** and the **Yaksus** brought in to him as tribute heads of horses.

Rv-5.52,17: *sapta me sapta śākina ekam-ekā śatā daduḥ |*

yamunāyām adhi śrutam ud rādho gavyam mṛje ni rādho aśvyam mṛje ||

सप्त मे सप्त शाकिन एकम-एका शता ददुः ।

यमुनायाम अधि शरुतम उद राधो गव्यम मर्जे नि राधो अश्व्यम मर्जे ॥

The mighty ones, the seven times seven, have singly given me hundred gifts.

I have obtained on **Yamuna** famed wealth in kine and wealth in **steeds**.

In the **Mandala-7** reference, it is mentioned that after getting defeated at the hands of **Sudasa** and **Trutsu** on the bank of river **Yamuna**, **Bheda** and his friends **Ajas**, **Sigrus** and **Yakshas** gift the heads of **Asvas** to the **Bharatas** [1].

The Poet of **Mandala-5** verse makes it clear that he was given cattle and **Asvas** as the gifts on the bank of river **Yamuna**.

It means to say that apart from the **Bharata tribe**, since a long time, **Asvas** were available with the people/tribes who lived on the bank of river **Yamuna** as well.

But the most puzzling question here is, as believed by almost all scholars that the **Asvas** are the **exclusive property** (a proprietary thing like **Ratha**?) of the **Aryas**, then how could the **non-Aryas** like **Bheda** and his colleagues offer them as the gifts to the **Poets/Aryas**?

This is because, unlike the **members** of the **Five Tribes**, the names of **Bheda** and his **associates** appear only in the hymn **Rv-7.18**. Hence they are considered as the **Non-Aryas**.

Summing up the discussion, presence of term the **Asva** along with river **Sindhu** during the period of composition of **Mandala-4**, and then its connection with river **Yamuna** in **Mandala-7** and **5** raises serious doubt about **Asva's** regular interpretation as the **True Horse**.

3. Health related issues on both directions of river Sindhu:

Health, the term of modern time, when understood in totality, covers physical, mental and social well-being of a person and simply does not mean the absence of disease. The common factors that govern the good health are clean water, air, proper place of shelter, and the availability of food grains in sufficient quantity. **Rv-7.50** is the Early Mandala hymn, wherein the Poet of **Vasistha** clan has described the living conditions prevailed in the **eastern part of Rigvedic Territory** when he personally visited the area adjoining upstream part of river **Saraswati**, but after the victory of the **Bharatas** in the “**War of Ten Kings**” [1].

Hymn Rv-7.50 addressed to Mitra Varuna, Water, and Rivers

- 1: O **Mitra-Varuna**, guard and protect me here: let not that come to me which nests within and swells.
I drive afar the scorpion hateful to the sight: let not the winding worm touch me and wound my foot.
- 2: Eruption that appears upon the twofold joints, and that which overspreads the ankles and the knees,
May the refulgent **Agni** banish far away let not the winding worm touch me and wound my foot.
- 3: The poison that is formed upon the **Salmali**, that which is found in streams, that which the plants produce,
All this, may all the Gods banish and drive away: let not the winding worm touch me and wound my foot.
- 4: The steep declivities, the valleys, and the heights, the channels full of water, and the waterless
May those who swell with water, gracious Goddesses, never afflict us with the **Sipada disease**, may all the Rivers keep us free from **Simida**.

In the **verse-1** of the hymn **Rv-7.50**, the Poet requests **Mitra** and **Varuna** to keep away worm from the people. It means to say that at that time, the Composer was living in a locality where harmful insects/worms were present everywhere and as per the description, the Poet had wounded his foot and hence he appeals to Gods to do something so that his wound not become dangerous. In the **verse-2**, the Poet prays **Agni** to keep away joint pain giving worms from his body. **Verse-3** indicates some plants/herbs have poisoned water bodies and the Shalmali tree present in that area. In the **verse-4**, the Composer has talked about the rivers of that region as having varied slope, width, and depth means they are not alike. Some carry water in them and some are water-less. He tells the river Goddesses to bring fresh water to them continuously so that water borne diseases like **Sipada** and **Simida** would not occur in that area. In other words, due to paucity of water, many people were suffering from water borne diseases in the eastern region (some persons could be the patients of **elephant foot disease (?)**). Hence it can be said that there were many health related problem on the east side of river **Sindhu**.

But during the second part of **Mandala-5**, when the Priests got relocated to west of river **Sindhu**, the change in place definitely brought relief to the People. In the verses **Rv-8.18,18** and **20**; the Poet requests to **Adityas** to lengthen the lives of the Priests. Moreover, the Composer of the verse **Rv-8.48,11** has highlighted the fact that due to regular consumption of **Soma**, their maladies have disappeared as on the west side, **Soma** was readily available [1].

Rv-8.48,11: Our maladies have lost their strength and vanished: they feared, and passed away into the darkness.
Soma hath risen in us, exceeding mighty, and we are come where men prolong existence.

But when the Last Mandala Poet while performing **Yajna** on the bank of river **Saraswati** requested the river to provide food that does not cause illness, it indirectly means he reminds the beloved river, that a long back, his forefathers had to spend the bad days on the bank of river **Saraswati** when there was severe water problem in the eastern region.

Rv-10.17,8: Saraswati, who camest with the Fathers, with them rejoicing thee in our oblations,
Seated upon this sacred grass be joyful, and give us strengthening **food that brings no sickness**.

In short, due to water scarcity, there were health issues on the east side of river **Sindhu**, but the Priests lived better life when they shifted to west side of river **Sindhu**.

V. Verses that laud *Saraswati* and *Sindhu* together:

In **Ten Mandalas of Rigved**, there are only two verses that bring river **Saraswati** and river **Sindhu** on the common platform. And both verses belong to the **Last Mandala of Rigved**, but the Poets have praised several other Rigvedic entities in these verses [1, 2].

Saraswati and Sindhu glorified together in the following two verses

Rv-10.64,9: *sarasvatī sarayuh sindhurūrmibhirmaho mahīravasā yantuvakṣaṇīh |*
devīrāpo mātaraḥ sūdayitno ghṛtavat payomadhuman no arcata ||

Let the great Streams come hither with their mighty help, **Sindhu, Saraswati, and Sarayu** with waves.
Ye Goddess Floods, ye Mothers, animating all, promise us water rich in fatness and in balm.

Rv-10.65,13: *pāvīravī tanyaturekapādajō divo dhartā sindhurāpaḥsamudriyaḥ |*
viśve devāsaḥ śṛṇavan vacāṃsi me sarasvatīsaha dhībhiḥ purandhyā ||

Thunder, the lightning's daughter, Aja-Ekapad, heaven's bearer, **Sindhu**, and the waters of the sea:

Hear all the Gods my words, **Saraswati** give ear together with Purandhi and with **Holy Thoughts**.

In short, “**Saraswati** signifies **Knowledge bestower** and **Sindhu** denotes **Wealth giver**.”

VI. Final Comments:

Comparative Assessment of the references of river **Saraswati** and **Sindhu**, the two prominent rivers of **Rigved** has led to following critical observations.

- It is beyond doubt that among several Vedic rivers, river **Saraswati** is the most beloved river of the Priestly Community since pre-Rigvedic time. But the hot debate on **her** geographical location is unfortunate and unnecessary as the Poets of the **Mandala-3** and the **Mandala-10** have provided contextual clues to arrive at the proper decision.
- There is no uncertainty about the location of river **Sindhu** as Ancient River still flows with full strength in present-day **Pakistan**. But several meanings of the Rigvedic term **Sindhu** has definitely created confusion about its used in the verses, as the said word has been employed by various Poets for different purposes, and hence it really poses problem for a researcher to identify or locate the application of the term **Sindhu** exactly in the context of the proper noun/river **Sindhu**.
- The most striking observation on the two rivers is, out of the **Five Early Mandalas**, only in **Mandala-4**, river **Saraswati** is conspicuously absent, but in the same Mandala, river **Sindhu** has been glorified in the three different hymns.
- Since pre-Rigvedic time, the ancestors of Rigvedic Priests have regarded river **Saraswati** as the **Pious Thought Initiator** or as the **Wisdom Inspirer**.
- In **Rigved**, no Rigvedic Poet in his composition has perceived river **Sindhu** as the **Pious Thought Provider** but intentionally **admired her** as the **richness contributor**.
- Like the case of **Saraswati**, no Rigvedic Poet has described river **Sindhu** was ever terrorized or influenced by demon **Vritra** (personification of drought). Hence it can be said that there was no scarcity of water on the west side of river **Sindhu**.
- Similar to **Saraswati**, river **Sindhu** has no place in any of the **Ten Apri Hymns**, but **Mandala-9** Poet has purposely inducted **Pavamana** term in all **eleven verses** of its **Apri Hymn (Rv-9.5)** including the **verse-8** that talks about the **Three Goddesses**.
- Despite the fact that during the entire Rigvedic period, river **Saraswati** was in a very bad shape, but the generations of Rigvedic Poets always remained emotionally attached, hence continued to worship **her** and among the rivers of Rigvedic Territory, regularly followed **Saraswati First Approach**. That is why, in the **Apri Suktas** of **Earliest Mandala (Mandala-2)** and the **Last Mandala**, **Saraswati** is the only River that finds **her** place as the **Goddess**, who is also greatly appreciated in the verse **Rv-2.41,16**.

- Similar to **Saraswati**, some Poets did term river **Sindhu** as their **mother**. The Last Mandala Poet has even denoted **waters (aapo)** as his **mother**.
- Presence of maximum number of **Dana-stuti Yajnas** in **Mandala-8** and a special mention of a new animal **camel** that was unknown to the **Poets of the Six Family Mandalas** along with other regular animals including **Asva** in the verses pertaining to **Dana-Stuti** and the appearance of river **Sindhu** in **six verses** of the **first thirty hymns** of **Mandala-8** clearly manifest that most of the hymns of this Mandala were composed on the west side of river **Sindhu**.
- Existence of the verses that praise river **Saraswati** in the **Mandala-8 (Rv-8.21,17 ;18)**; **Mandala-1 (Rv-1.3,10 to 12)**; and **Mandala-10 (Rv-10.17,7 to 9)** excluding the **Apri Suktas** imply that although the majority of the **Songs of Praise** of these **Three Late Mandalas** were composed in the western part of the **Rigvedic Territory**, still the members of the Priestly Community did not forget their dearest river and some of them personally visited the known places of the drought affected **Ilaspade** region (in **Mandala-1** and **10**, the term **Ilaspade** is noticed in some hymns, and in the aforementioned **Three Late Mandalas**, the phrase **Sapta-Sindhu** is present) and composed the Poems while performing **Yajnas** on **her** bank as and when felt.
- Glorification of **Saraswati** and **Sindhu** in the hymns of many Rigvedic Mandalas along with several Rigvedic Entities explicitly convey that the generations of Poets have permanently accepted both of them as the **Goddesses**.

As long as there exists **Vedic Experts** who undertake the **targeted interpretation** of the **archaic Sanskrit words**, then it difficult to prevent the **character assassination** of the **Rigvedic entities** whether the real or mythical.

VII. References:

1. “Rig Veda” (Bilingual), Translated by Ralph T. H. Griffith (1896) in PDF
2. Rig Veda (Griffith Translation)-Table of Content, Alphabetical frequency etc. from the Intratext Digital Library available on www.Intratext.com
3. Monier-Williams Dictionary.

“Who knows, after sometime, someone from a new batch of the **AMT scholars** would declare that river **Amazon of South America** is the real river **Sindhu**, and river **Mississippi** or river **Colorado of North America** is the actual river **Saraswati of Rigved**”.